THE OPERA THAT WALKS

A SUPERGRAPHIC ATLAS OF BELCANTO

THE WISH-GRANTING OPERA HOUSE FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

A SUPERHERO IN TIMBER & SONG · 22 SPECIMENS · 7 CONTINENTS

COLOUR REGISTER · NO BLACK

SURJAN, WITH THE AID OF CLAUDE

SURJAN SUPER SCHOOL

02

THE COLOPHON

WHO BELCANTO IS

BELCANTO behaves like a superhero. It is an opera house grown for children with autism: five great timber pipes that breathe, that sing, and that lower the volume of the world.

It hears each child before a word is spoken. It turns the loud grey city into a soft warm song. And it grants wishes.

Each wish arrives as a coloured pod that plugs into the singing wall. When a city's wishes are all granted, BELCANTO rises on its roots, or lifts on its bolsters, and walks on to the next child who wished.

HOUSE RULES · LIGHT SUPERGRAPHIC DIALECT

N

PAPER	#F7F1E3
DARKEST (NO BLACK)	#5C5142
LIGHT PINK	#F2C1D1
LIGHT BLUE	#AAD4E6
SOFT YELLOW	#EFD46B

PAPER · INK · L.PINK · L.BLUE · YELLOW

SURJAN, WITH THE AID OF CLAUDE

03

A SHORT GENEALOGY OF SUPER-STRUCTURES

WHAT BELCANTO INHERITS FROM THE PAPER ARCHITECTS · RESEARCHED AS PRECEDENT

1964

ARCHIGRAM · WALKING CITY

Ron Herron

Giant pods on telescopic legs roam land and ocean, dock, share resources.

→ THE LEGS · THE ROAMING

1964

ARCHIGRAM · PLUG-IN CITY

Peter Cook

Modular capsules clipped into a megastructure and swapped at will.

→ THE WISH-VALVES

1968

ARCHIGRAM · INSTANT CITY

the group

A travelling kit of blimps and inflatables descends, then leaves a network.

→ THE DESCENT · THE GIFT

1969

SUPERSTUDIO · CONTINUOUS MON.

Natalini & Frassinelli

One calm colossal gridded block striding over every landscape and continent.

→ THE OVERSCALE

1966

SEA RANCH · SUPERGRAPHICS

B. Stauffacher Solomon

Oversized, cropped numbers and hard-edge colour at building scale.

→ THE SKIN & THE NUMBERS

1972

LEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS

Venturi Scott Brown

The decorated shed and the duck: the building as a sign that openly speaks.

→ THE VOICE

COLOUR REGISTER · NO BLACK

PART ONE

THE SPECIMEN

BELCANTO ANATOMISED · 22 RENDERINGS · PLATES 05–26

*“Take me apart if you like — every pipe of me is a lung,
every window a wish already half-granted.”*

04

05

PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

THE FIVE GREAT PIPES

FRONT ELEVATION · 1:250

HEIGHT	64.0 M + PLINTH
GREAT PIPES	5 · ø 10.8 M
WISH-VALVES	32 · ø 3.2 M
SEATS	1,180 QUIET

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Five pipes tall, and I know the name of everyone before they speak.

SURJAN, WITH THE AID OF CLAUDE

06

PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

THE WOVEN REGISTER

FACADE MATRIX · ORTHO 1:200

GRID	14 × 7 BAYS
BAY	6.0 × 6.0 M
LIVE STOPS	32 COLOURED
READING	L→R, T→B

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Read me like a score: each bright square is a promise already kept.

PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

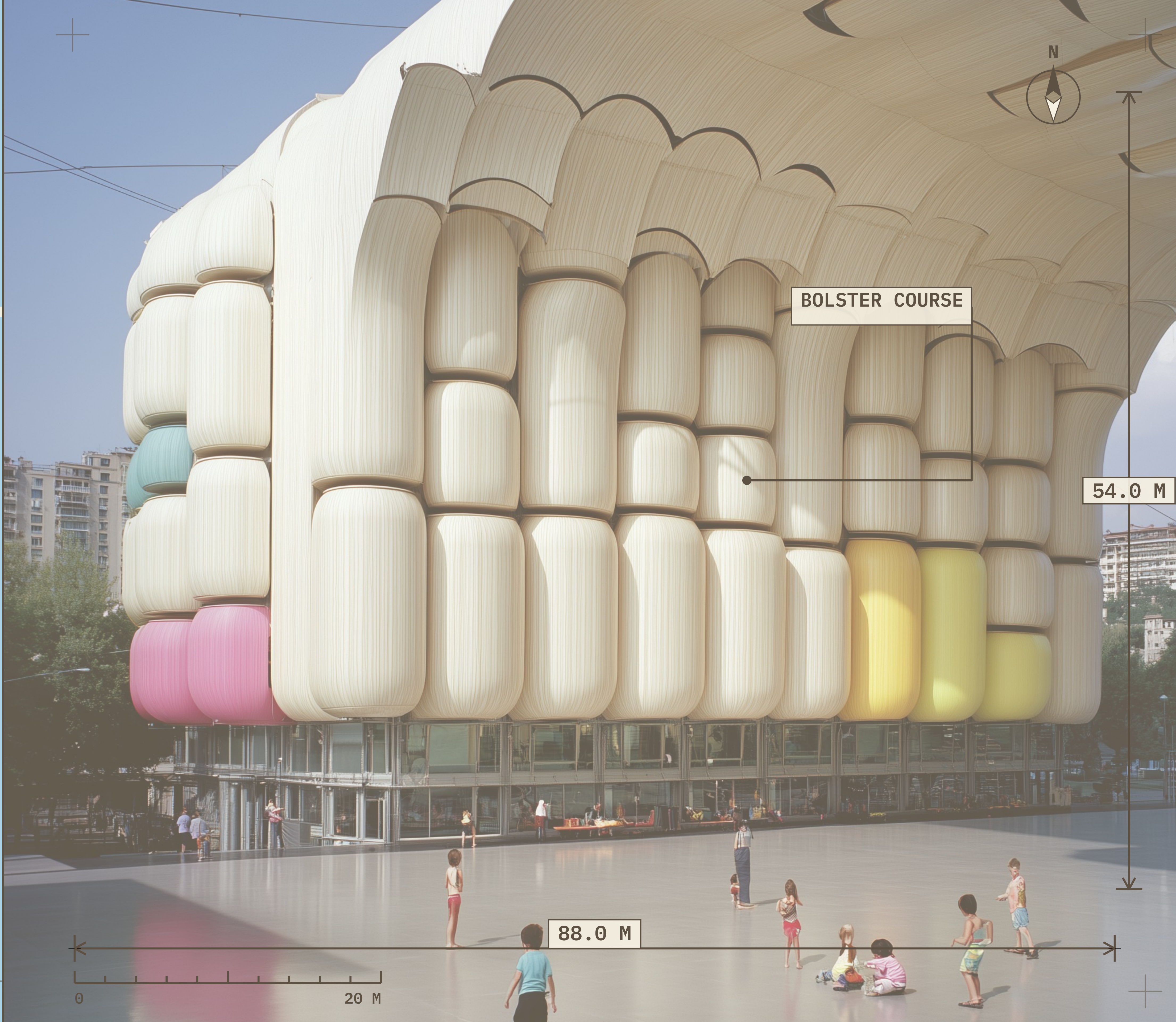
THE BOLSTER CLOUD

SOUTH-WEST FLANK · 1:300

BOLSTERS	148 PNEUMATIC
BOLSTER ø	1.9–2.4 M
CANTILEVER	14.0 M CLEAR
SKIN	STEAM-BENT FIR

BELCANTO SPEAKS

I am soft where the world is hard.
Lean on me and listen.



08

PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

THE HOVERING MASS

THREE-QUARTER · 1:350

CANTILEVER	14.0 M
COLUMNS	8 ROOT-FEET
PLINTH	6.4 M GLAZED
MASS	A TIMBER CLOUD

BELCANTO SPEAKS

I hover so children may gather in my shade and look up.

THE ROLLING EAVE

SOFFIT CURVE · DETAIL 1:150

EAVE RADIUS	9.0 M
BOLSTER	PNEUMATIC FIR
REACH	12.0 M
FINISH	WARM TIMBER

BELCANTO SPEAKS

My edge rolls over like a wave
that decided to stay.

10

PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

THE WEST PROW

ROUNDED END · APPROACH 1:300

PROW ø	24.0 M
HEIGHT	62.0 M
PLINTH	6.4 M
APPROACH	OPEN PLAZA

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Come around my prow: I am always turning to meet you.

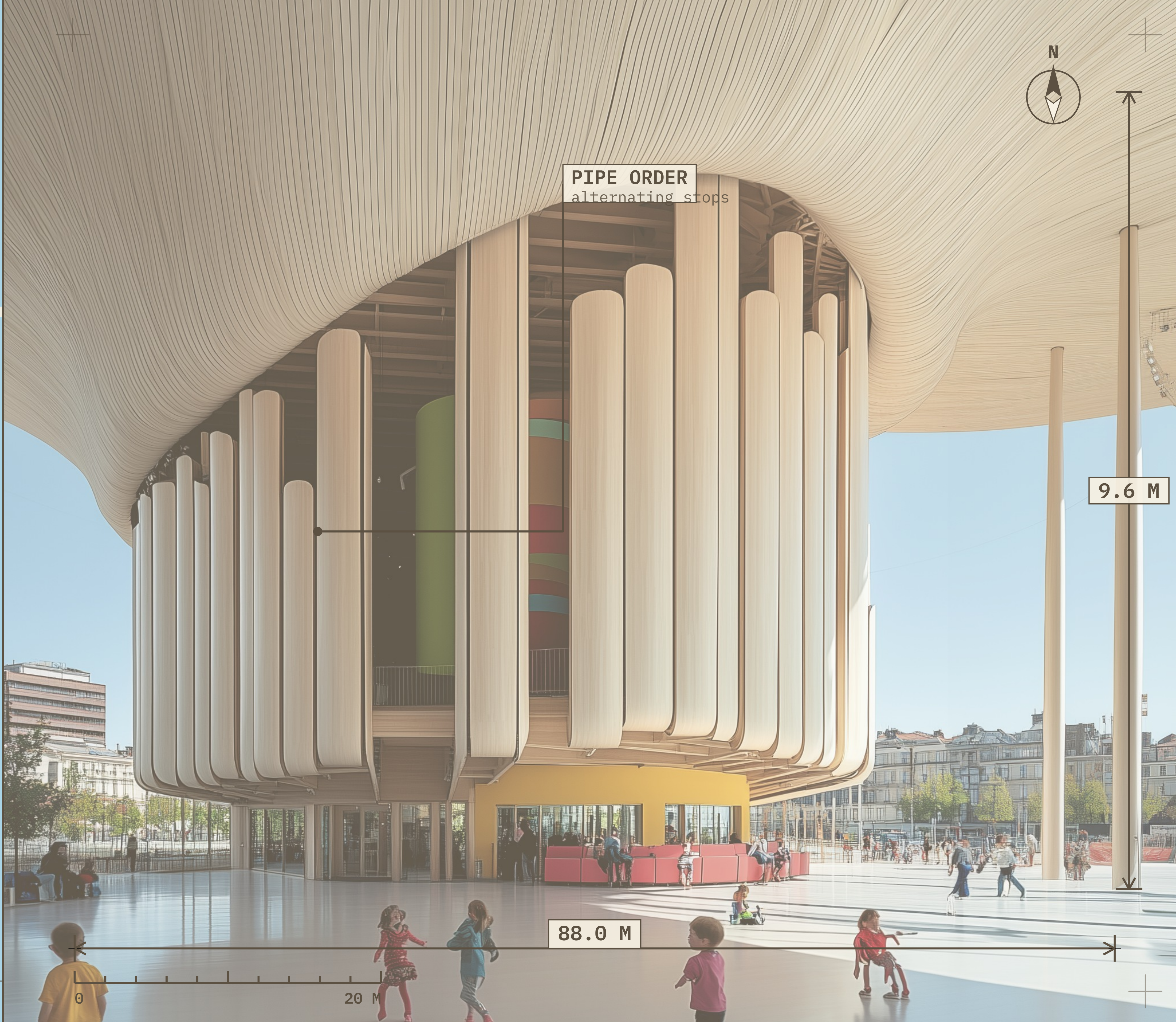
THE FOREST OF PIPES

GROUND COLONNADE · 1:200

PIPES	18 @ 4.8 M
CLEAR HT	9.6 M
FLOOR	CORK, SOUND-SOFT
ECHO	NONE BY DESIGN

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Walk between my pipes and trail your hand; each is tuned to a quiet.



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PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

THE WISH-VALVES

PLUG-IN PODS · EXPLODED 1:75

POD ø	3.2 M
COLLAR	CLICK-IN
PINK	WISH SPOKEN
YELLOW	WISH KEPT QUIET

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Plug your wish in here. It clicks. I keep it safe until it comes true.

13

PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

THE STOP-REGISTER

COLONNADE · PIPE ORDER 1:200

PIPES	18 no.
TUNING	1 CHILD / PIPE
STOPS	PINK & YELLOW
FLOOR	CORK

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Every pipe is tuned to a different child's favourite quiet.

14

PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

THE AUDITORIUM ORGAN

LONG SECTION · HALL 1:300

CLEAR HT	22.0 M
SEATS	1,180 QUIET
VAULT	GLULAM @ 1.8 M
SENSORY	0–52 dB

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Inside me the ceiling is a forest,
and the forest sings.

15

PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

THE INNER CHOIR

HALL · TRANSVERSE 1:250

PODS	CORAL & PINK
COLUMNS	ROOT-FEET
LIGHT	1,800–3,000 K
MOOD	WARM, HUSHED

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Stand in my middle and hum; the whole choir hums it back.

PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

THE VOICE-CYLINDER

INTERIOR TOWER · 1:200

HEIGHT	18.0 M
ø	11.0 M
PORTHOLES	9 PINK OCULI
ACOUSTIC	WHISPER-RATED

BELCANTO SPEAKS

This is my throat; speak a wish into it softly and I will hum it.

PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

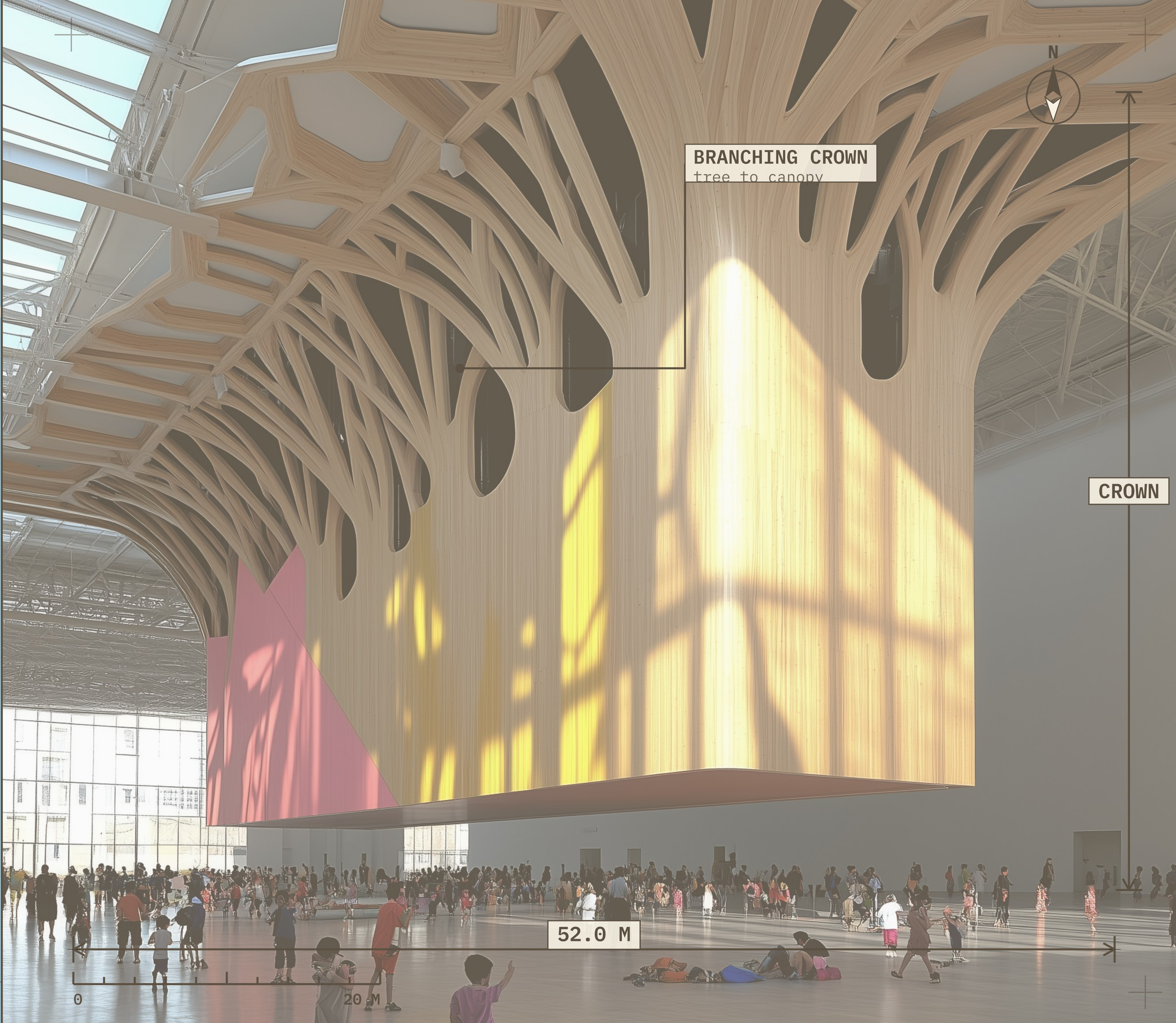
THE CANOPY OF STOPS

REFLECTED CEILING PLAN 1:250

SPAN	52.0 M
CROWN NODES	96 BRANCHING
GLAZING	PINK-FILTERED
GLARE	ZERO

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Look up: a hundred hands holding a hundred wishes into the light.



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PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

THE YELLOW PROW

EXTERIOR PROW · 1:300

PROW	YELLOW STOP
HEIGHT	60.0 M
PLINTH	6.4 M
SKY	LIGHT BLUE

BELCANTO SPEAKS

My yellow prow is a wish for morning, granted every single day.

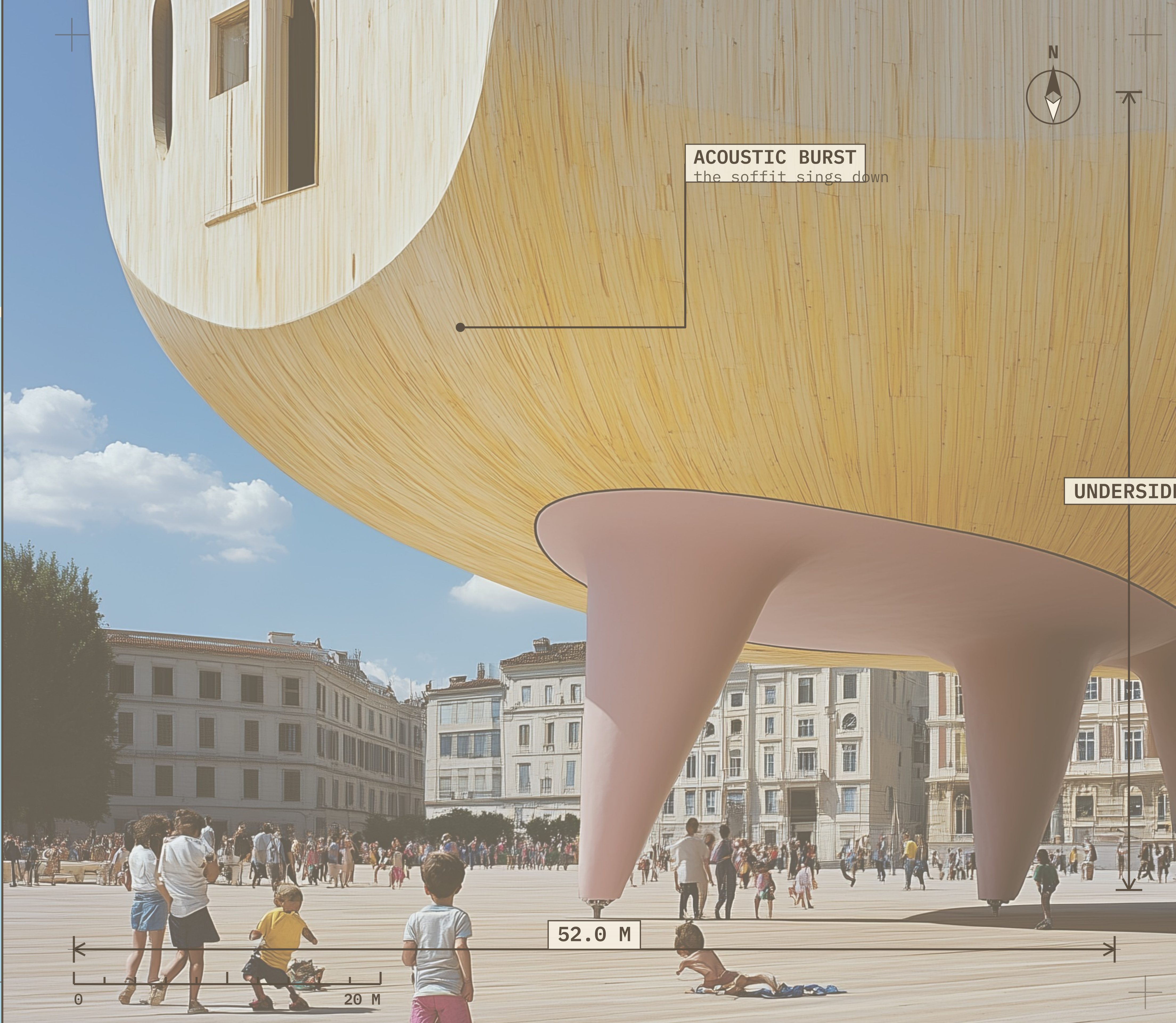
THE SOUNDING SOFFIT

UP-VIEW · UNDERSIDE 1:250

UNDERSIDE	52 × 40 M
FEET	8 ROOT-COLUMNS
FINISH	ACOUSTIC FELT
USE	LIE-DOWN LISTENING

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Lie on your back beneath me and I will play you the afternoon.



THE CORAL VAULT

INTERIOR FEET · 1:150

VAULT-FEET	CORAL PODS
KNEE HT	12.0 M
SPAN	GLULAM
FLOOR	SOUND-SOFT

BELCANTO SPEAKS

These knees carry my song, and one day they will carry me to you.

21

PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

THE RIBBED GALLERY

INTERIOR RIBS · 1:200

RIB PITCH	1.8 M
MATERIAL	LAMINATED FIR
GALLERY	PROMENADE
LIGHT	SOFT, EVEN

BELCANTO SPEAKS

My ribs are a calm counting: one, two, three, breathe.

THE WAVING SOFFIT

UP-VIEW · CURVED SOFFIT 1:250

CURVE	CONTINUOUS
REACH	14.0 M
FEET	ROOT-COLUMNS
MOOD	GENTLE

BELCANTO SPEAKS

My underneath waves at you; it has been waiting all morning.

23

PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

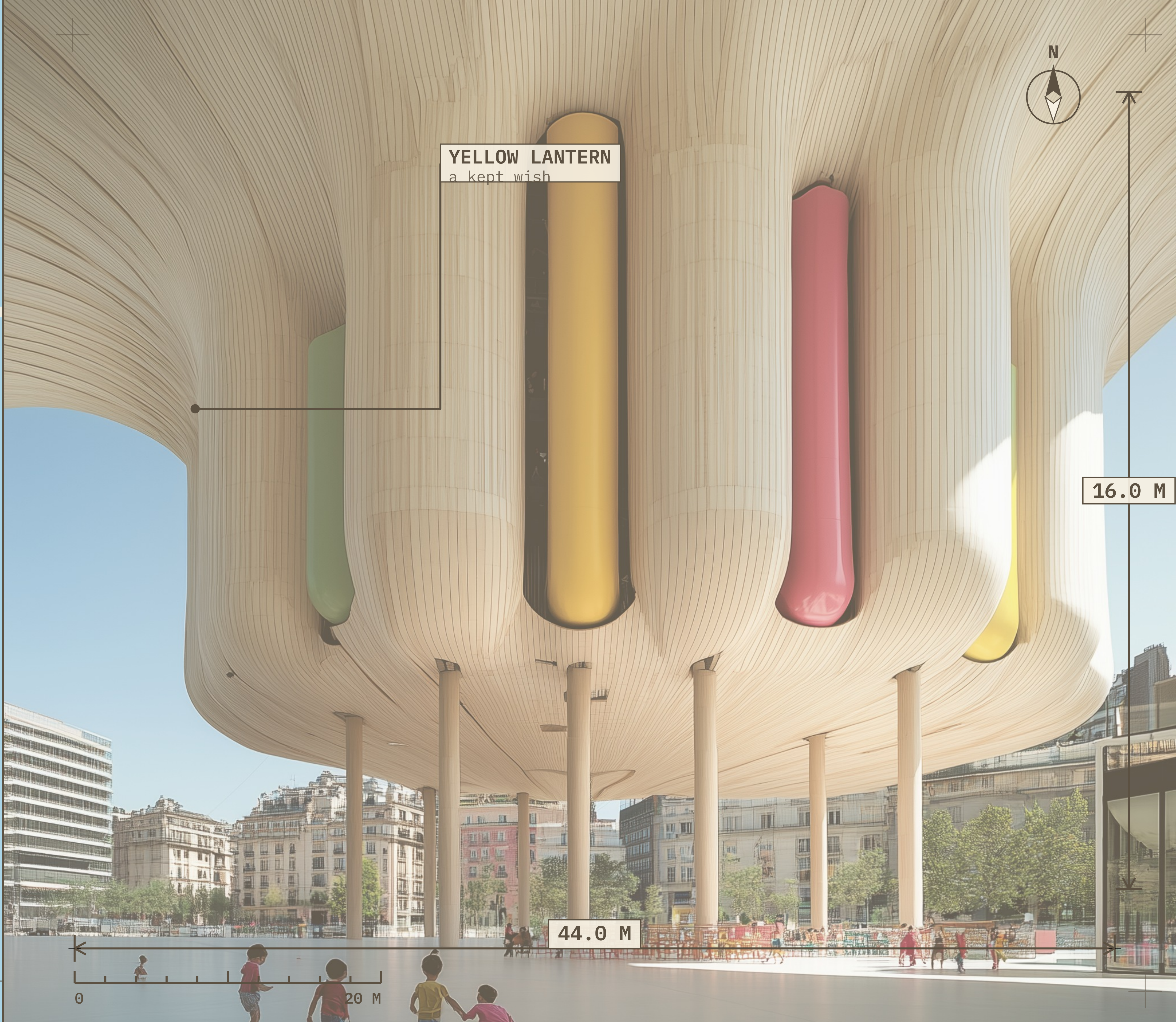
THE TWO LANTERNS

INTERIOR OCULI · 1:200

OCULI	2 YELLOW LANTERNS
HEIGHT	16.0 M
GLAZING	WARM
CITY	BEYOND

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Two yellow lanterns keep watch so no child is ever in the dark.



PART ONE · THE SPECIMEN

THE GREAT NAVE

INTERIOR COLONNADE · 1:300

NAVE	GREAT COLONNADE
PIPES	COLOURED STOPS
CLEAR HT	20.0 M
FLOOR	QUIET

BELCANTO SPEAKS

My nave is long and low-voiced, a corridor made entirely of calm.

THE LISTENING FLOOR

INTERIOR LONG VIEW · 1:300

FLOOR	POLISHED, SOFT
PIPES	PINK & YELLOW
GLAZING	FULL-HEIGHT
SOUND	HELD GENTLY

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Even my floor is listening; that is why it keeps so still.

THE AMBER THROAT

INTERIOR VOID · 1:200

VOID	AMBER THROAT
HEIGHT	24.0 M
USE	SLIDE / GATHER
LIGHT	HONEYED

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Slide down my amber throat; I have been laughing since you arrived.

PART TWO

THE OPERA THAT WALKS

BELCANTO ABROAD · ALL CONTINENTS · PLATES 28–36

*"I outgrew the plaza. Now I am the size of weather,
and I step over oceans to reach the child who wished."*

28

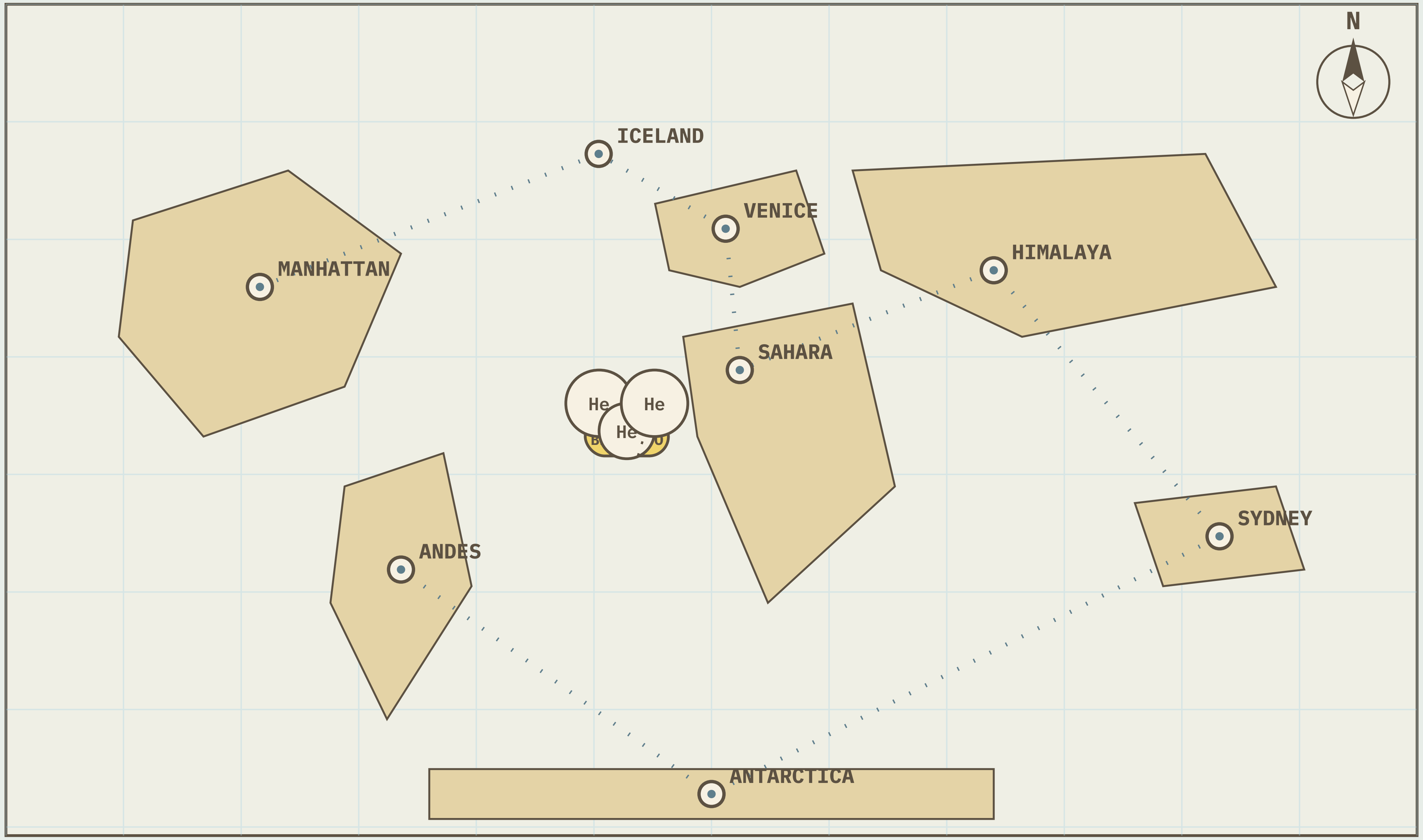
THE MIGRATION

WORLD ROUTE · ALL SEVEN CONTINENTS

ROUTE	8 STOPS
MODE	WALK · LOFT · SAIL
SPEED	1.2–40 km/h
RULE	EVERY CONTINENT

BELCANTO SPEAKS

I outgrew the plaza; now I step over oceans to reach the child who wished.



OVER MANHATTAN

NORTH AMERICA · THE ISLAND STOP

MODE	WALK · LOFT · SAIL
SCALE	OVER-SCALED
CONTINENT	NORTH AMERICA
WISHES	GRANTED ON ARRIVAL

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Manhattan, stand still — I am tuning your whole grid to a hush.

SURJAN, WITH THE AID OF CLAUDE

PART TWO · THE OPERA THAT WALKS

OVER ICELAND

EUROPE / N. ATLANTIC · THE BASALT STOP

MODE	WALK · LOFT · SAIL
SCALE	OVER-SCALED
CONTINENT	EUROPE / N. ATLANTIC
WISHES	GRANTED ON ARRIVAL

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Iceland, I sang into the fissure
until the cold turned kind.

BELCANTO = 1 SMALL VOLCANO

OVER THE FISSURE · 8 km

SURJAN, WITH THE AID OF CLAUDE

PART TWO · THE OPERA THAT WALKS

OVER VENICE

EUROPE · THE LAGOON STOP

MODE	WALK · LOFT · SAIL
SCALE	OVER-SCALED
CONTINENT	EUROPE
WISHES	GRANTED ON ARRIVAL

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Venice, you invented the opera; I am its child come home over water.

BELCANTO = 1 CAMPANILE × 6

N

ACROSS THE GRAND CANAL

32

PART TWO · THE OPERA THAT WALKS

OVER THE SAHARA

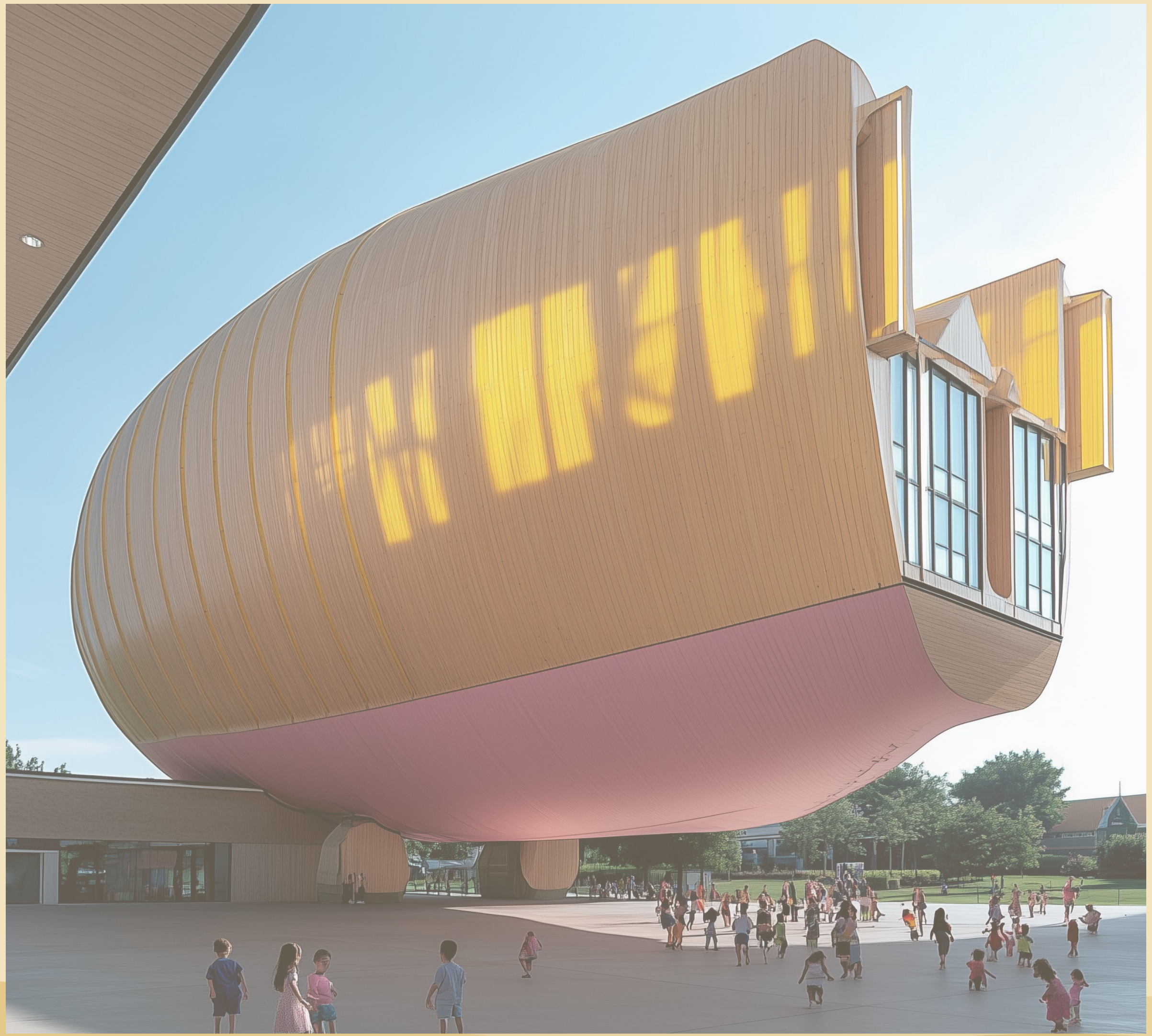
AFRICA · THE DUNE STOP

MODE	WALK · LOFT · SAIL
SCALE	OVER-SCALED
CONTINENT	AFRICA
WISHES	GRANTED ON ARRIVAL

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Sahara, I am the only shade for a hundred miles — wish here for rain.

BELCANTO = 30 DUNES LONG



SHADE FOR 40 km OF SAND

SURJAN, WITH THE AID OF CLAUDE

OVER THE HIMALAYA

ASIA · THE HIGH STOP

MODE	WALK · LOFT · SAIL
SCALE	OVER-SCALED
CONTINENT	ASIA
WISHES	GRANTED ON ARRIVAL

BELCANTO SPEAKS

I stood on the roof of the world and still bent low for the smallest child.

N

BELCANTO = 1/12 OF EVEREST

ABOVE THE ROOF OF THE WORLD

34

PART TWO · THE OPERA THAT WALKS

OVER SYDNEY

OCEANIA · THE HARBOUR STOP

MODE	WALK · LOFT · SAIL
SCALE	OVER-SCALED
CONTINENT	OCEANIA
WISHES	GRANTED ON ARRIVAL

BELCANTO SPEAKS

Sydney, your white sails taught me to sing; now I sing for the small.

BELCANTO = THE WHOLE HARBOUR

ACROSS THE HARBOUR MOUTH

PART TWO · THE OPERA THAT WALKS

OVER ANTARCTICA

ANTARCTICA · THE ICE STOP

MODE	WALK · LOFT · SAIL
SCALE	OVER-SCALED
CONTINENT	ANTARCTICA
WISHES	GRANTED ON ARRIVAL

BELCANTO SPEAKS

No continent is too far or too cold; a child wished here, so I came.

SURJAN, WITH THE AID OF CLAUDE

N

BELCANTO = 1 WARM ISLAND

WARMTH FOR THE COLDEST PLACE

36

PART TWO · THE OPERA THAT WALKS

OVER THE ANDES

SOUTH AMERICA · THE TERRACE STOP

MODE	WALK · LOFT · SAIL
SCALE	OVER-SCALED
CONTINENT	SOUTH AMERICA
WISHES	GRANTED ON ARRIVAL

BELCANTO SPEAKS

The Andes terraced the mountain
for corn; I terrace it for calm.

N

BELCANTO = 40 TERRACES HIGH

OVER THE ANCIENT TERRACES

THE GREAT WISH

2,000,000 GRANTED · AND COUNTING

BELCANTO SPEAKS

This is the whole of it: a loud world made soft, a small wish made huge, and hung in the sky as colour. Wish again — I am listening.

COLOUR REGISTER · NO BLACK

THE OPERA THAT WALKS

A SUPERGRAPHIC ATLAS OF BELCANTO

The wish-granting opera house for children with autism.
Twenty-two specimens, then set loose across all seven continents.

Drawn in the light supergraphic dialect — light pink, light blue,
soft yellow, warm timber — and no black, the darkest tone #5C5142.

SURJAN, WITH THE AID OF CLAUDE

PUBLISHED BY SURJAN SUPER SCHOOL

FIRST EDITION · FINIS

COLOUR REGISTER · NO BLACK